

Mobilize the working class against Trump's dictatorship!

Socialist Equality Party (US)

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This statement will be distributed at demonstrations held on Saturday, June 14. On June 15, the WSWS is holding an emergency online meeting, "Trump's coup and how to stop it." We urge all our readers to register and attend.

On Saturday, June 14, protests will take place in more than 2,000 locations across the United States. Following a week of demonstrations, masses of working people and youth are taking to the streets in cities across the country in opposition to Trump's assault on immigrants and his moves to establish a presidential dictatorship.

All those who are demonstrating must understand that they are confronting a crisis without precedent in more than a century, comparable only to the Civil War. Then, it was a life-and-death struggle against the slavocracy; today, it is a life-and-death struggle against capitalism and the ruling oligarchy.

On the same day as the protests, a massive military parade is being staged in Washington, D.C., following a week of escalating military deployments in Los Angeles. Ostensibly held to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the US Army, the real purpose of the parade is to pay tribute to Trump on his 79th birthday and to demonstrate his unchallengeable personal control over the military.

The parade is intended as a warning by Trump to all opponents that he governs by command of the armed forces and police. The Constitutional framework of checks and balances is being scrapped. In its place, Trump is establishing presidential rule by decree, enforced through emergency orders, military power and fascistic violence.

The assault Thursday on California Senator Alex Padilla is in line with this campaign of political and physical intimidation. Padilla was violently manhandled and handcuffed by FBI agents while posing questions to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

On Tuesday, Trump delivered a tirade at Fort Bragg, denouncing opponents and protesters as "animals" and "enemies" to be crushed. Noem declared in the same press conference from which Padilla was ejected that the military would remain in Los Angeles to "liberate the city from the socialists." This is the language of the Nazis. When Hitler came to power, he too declared that it was the end of socialism.

All of Trump's actions are blatantly and flagrantly illegal. On Thursday, a federal judge in California issued a ruling blocking the deployment of the National Guard to Los Angeles, writing: "[Trump's] actions were illegal — both exceeding the scope of his statutory authority and violating the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution." By Thursday night, an appeals court put a temporary block on this order, pending a hearing on June 17.

No one should be under the illusion that judicial decisions, even if they go against it, will stop the administration, which has already violated court rulings. Earlier in the week, Trump's fascistic defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, repeatedly refused to state that the White House would abide by a judicial ruling against it.

What is being set into motion is a massive escalation of violence—at

home and abroad. On the eve of Trump's military parade, Israel launched hundreds of military strikes against Iran. The genocide in Gaza is now expanding into a full-scale war throughout the Middle East.

For those protesting on Saturday, critical questions of perspective are posed: How will this be stopped? How can Trump's coup be defeated?

The events of the past week have made one thing absolutely clear: No significant opposition will be organized by the Democratic Party. While Trump speaks in the language of violence and civil war, the Democrats respond with lawsuits and tearful lamentations.

While offering tepid criticisms of Trump's "excesses," the Democrats have echoed his narrative and aided in suppressing opposition. California Governor Gavin Newsom has deployed 800 state police to oversee mass arrests in Los Angeles, while Mayor Karen Bass has mobilized the LAPD to crack down on protests. The message is clear: "Let us handle the repression."

The party's cowardice was epitomized by "left" Democrat Elizabeth Warren, who, amid Trump's unfolding coup, used a *New York Times* op-ed to state her agreement with his proposal to abolish the debt ceiling—akin to saying, "I don't like fascism, but Mussolini made the trains run on time."

Bernie Sanders is again playing his assigned role as a political safety valve. He combines demagogic denunciations of the oligarchy with slavish support for the capitalist Democratic Party and fatuous appeals for better behavior by the Republicans. In the most flagrant display of political cynicism and opportunism, Sanders has stated that Trump himself has "done right" in closing the border and attacking immigrants.

As always, the response of the Democrats is characterized by a combination of cowardice, fecklessness, and outright deceit. Underlying this, however, are political interests and class considerations. The Democratic Party, no less than the Republicans, is a party of the corporate and financial oligarchy. Its principal disagreements with Trump have centered on matters of foreign policy.

The Democrats are terrified that mass resistance to Trump could develop into a broader movement against social inequality, capitalism and the entire framework of American imperialism.

Government of the oligarchy

The Democrats seek to maintain the pretense that the present crisis is nothing more than a temporary diversion from political norms, and that the assaults on democratic rights are merely "excesses" that stem from Trump's personality. What they will not say is that the violent restructuring of the state is aimed at the creation of a *permanent* political dictatorship.

The Trump administration is a government of, by, and for the financial oligarchy.

But it must be understood that the breakdown of democratic forms in the United States did not arise overnight. Nearly 65 years have passed since Eisenhower warned of the implications of the power of the military-

industrial complex. Over half a century has passed since the Watergate crisis exposed the first major political conspiracy by an American president, Nixon. It has been twenty-five years since the theft of a presidential election through the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in *Bush v. Gore*.

The "war on terror" following the attacks of September 11, 2001 was used to justify, under Democrats and Republicans, a systematic erosion of democratic rights—including in the Patriot Act, the Department of Homeland Security, Guantanamo Bay, CIA torture, domestic spying and drone assassination by presidential order.

These developments are bound up with three interrelated causes: 1) the long-term decline of American capitalism, 2) the efforts to reverse this decline through military violence around the world, and 3) the extreme growth of social inequality, which has reached levels without precedent in American history.

Trump, the huckster and conman, has risen to the presidency out of these conditions through a process of political selection. His second term conforms to a definite logic of oligarchic rule.

The wave of brutal assaults on immigrants and mass deportations has followed the police crackdowns, arrests, and detentions of students protesting the genocide in Gaza; attacks on scientists and medical professionals; and efforts to bring culture, education, and public discourse under authoritarian control.

The fundamental target is the working class. Everything that detracts from the wealth and power of the capitalist elite—public education, environmental and workplace regulations, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid—is to be dismantled. Trump's "big beautiful budget," filled with promises of massive tax cuts for the rich, seeks to pay for them through savage austerity and the destruction of what remains of the social safety net.

The turn to dictatorship within the United States is inseparable from the eruption of imperialist violence abroad. The expansion of war in the Middle East is part of an escalating global conflict, with the Trump administration setting its sights on China. Trump is building upon the record of the Biden administration, which escalated the US-NATO war against Russia and gave full backing to the genocide in Gaza.

Those who are demonstrating on Saturday must draw the conclusions from this political reality. It is impossible to stop the drive to dictatorship without identifying and fighting its source: the capitalist system.

The Socialist Equality Party advances the following program to fight Trump's coup d'état:

First, the fight against Trump must be rooted in the working class. There is enormous opposition throughout society to what Trump is doing—among scientists, professionals, students and broad elements within the middle class. But the social force that can and must lead the movement against Trump is the working class.

The immense strength of the working class must be mobilized against Trump's coup in a general strike—the utilization of the power of the workers, rooted in the process of production, to bring production to a halt.

This requires the organization of workers independently of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which is treating Trump's coup and the brutal assault on immigrant workers as if it is not even happening. As workers are being seized and deported and democratic rights obliterated at every turn, the union apparatus, wedded to the corporations and the state, is doing nothing.

The SEP calls for the formation of rank-and-file committees in every factory, workplace, and neighborhood, becoming centers of opposition to dictatorship, uniting all workers of all races and ethnicities, immigrant and native-born.

Second, mass popular opposition to Trump's assault on democratic rights must be connected to clear and urgent demands: the immediate withdrawal of all troops from American cities; the dismantling of ICE and

an end to all immigration raids; the disbanding of paramilitary units and reversal of executive orders enabling dictatorship; and the removal and prosecution of all those involved in the conspiracy to overturn the Constitution.

Third, the fight against dictatorship is necessarily an international struggle. The ruling elites in every major capitalist country are lurching to the right, waging war on democratic rights as they escalate their assault on the working class. And every worker knows that the establishment of dictatorship in the United States will sound the death knell for democratic rights everywhere. The crisis is global, and the response must be global.

Fourth, there can be no fight against fascism and dictatorship outside of a fight against capitalism and for socialism. The wealth of the oligarchy must be expropriated and the gigantic corporations and banks transformed into public utilities, under the control of the working class. The defense of democratic rights must be connected to the establishment of democratic control over social and economic life, as the basis for establishing a society rooted in social equality.

When Trump and his lackeys denounce socialism, it is because they themselves recognize the fundamental issue—that in their turn to dictatorship they are defending capitalism against the working class and socialism.

The vast political changes underway in social relations require a profound transformation in strategy. What has passed for "left" politics—based on race and gender identity, the politics of the upper-middle class—never could, and certainly cannot now, provide a way forward.

The struggle against dictatorship requires the revival of genuine socialism—rooted in the revolutionary, internationalist traditions of Marxism and embodied in the program and history of the Trotskyist movement and the International Committee of the Fourth International. It is only on this foundation that the working class can build the leadership necessary to confront the immense dangers it faces.

The Trump administration, in all of its actions, demonstrates the historic bankruptcy of capitalism. Humanity is once again confronted with the basic alternatives: socialism or barbarism.

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